

As mentioned for the comments received on the Draft EIS, the compact disks provided with the Summary of this Final EIS contains complete images of all comments received on the Supplement through August 31, 2001. In addition, DOE has placed this material on the Internet site for the proposed Yucca Mountain Repository (www.ymmp.gov), and has placed copies in DOE Reading Rooms across the country.

HOW DOE CONSIDERED PUBLIC COMMENTS

DOE assessed and considered public comments on the Draft EIS and the Supplement to the Draft EIS, both individually and collectively. Some comments led to EIS modifications; others resulted in a response to explain DOE policy, to refer readers to information in the EIS, to answer technical questions, to further explain technical issues, to correct reader misinterpretations, or to provide clarification.

A number of comments provided valuable suggestions on improving the EIS. As applicable, the responses in this volume identify changes that DOE made to the EIS as a result of comments.

Methodology

Because of the large number of submittals (letters, e-mails, faxes, comment forms, public hearing transcripts) received during the public comment periods on the Draft EIS and the Supplement to the Draft EIS, DOE elected to extract and categorize comments and, as appropriate, group the same or similar comments for response. This approach enabled the Department to more efficiently consider, individually and collectively, all comments received on the Draft EIS and the Supplement, and to respond to those comments.

The following list highlights key aspects of the DOE approach to capturing, tracking, and responding to public comments on the Draft EIS and the Supplement:

- DOE read all comment documents and their attachments to identify and extract comments. As a part of this process, DOE reviewed technical attachments (e.g., reports) for potential applicability to the EIS. After comment identification, DOE grouped individual comments by categories (called *bins*) and assigned each comment to an expert in the appropriate discipline to prepare a response. Senior-level experts reviewed each response to ensure technical and scientific accuracy, clarity, and consistency, and to ensure that the response fully answered the comment.
- Frequently, more than one commenter submitted identical or similar comments. In such cases, DOE grouped the comments and prepared a single summary response for each group. Summarization of comments was also appropriate because of the large number of comments received.
- To the extent practicable, DOE presented the comments in this document by topic. Each comment-response pair, individual or summary, consists of three parts: (1) the number of the submitted comment document and the comment number, or for summary comments, the number of comments summarized, (2) the individual or summary comment, and (3) the response. While this Comment-Response Document is generally organized by topic, some comment documents dealt with multiple issues. DOE chose to identify the multiple issues as one comment and answer each element of the comment. For this reason, there are instances where comments and their responses address issues that are unrelated to the topic (that is, the Comment-Response Document chapter and section) to which the comment was assigned.
- To the extent practicable, this Comment-Response Document presents the comments extracted from comment documents as stated by the commenters. That is, with the exception of correcting obvious

errors and other minor modifications (see next bullet), DOE has neither edited nor rewritten the comments submitted. Comments grouped and summarized for response are, of necessity, paraphrased, but DOE made every effort to capture the essence of every comment included in a comment summary.

- DOE did not modify certified transcripts of public hearings. However, some transcripts contained obvious errors (for example, misspelled names or words). For this Comment-Response Document, DOE corrected such errors in the extracted comments. Similarly, DOE deleted extraneous material (such as repeated words) from extracted comments whenever such a deletion would not alter the meaning of the comment. The compact disk included with this Final EIS contains an image of the text of each hearing transcript as certified by the court reporter; if appropriate, the transcript includes an errata sheet noting errors that DOE corrected.
- DOE made every effort to be fully responsive to every comment it received on the Draft EIS and the Supplement. When the meaning of a comment was not clear, DOE made a reasonable attempt to interpret the comment and respond based on that interpretation. In such cases, the response is preceded by a statement of the DOE interpretation of the comment.

An Overview of Key Issues Raised in Comments

This section provides short summaries of a variety of key issues raised by commenters (presented in underlined *italics*) during the public comment process for the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada* (the Draft EIS) and for the *Supplement to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada* (the Supplement to the Draft EIS). It also provides DOE responses to those key issues. DOE identified the issues as “key” based on factors such as:

- The number of comments received on a particular issue.
- The extent to which an issue concerned fundamental aspects of the Proposed Action.
- The nature of the comments as characterized by the commenters. For example, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC or the Commission) categorized its comments into those that DOE should address to complete the Final EIS, those of lower priority that apply to specific topical areas, and those that are for consideration only.
- The extent to which DOE changed the EIS in response to the issue.

The main body of this Comment-Response Document contains all the comments DOE received on the Draft EIS and on the Supplement to the Draft EIS, and the DOE responses to those comments. DOE encourages readers to review the specific comments and DOE responses for particular areas of interest.

I. NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY ACT PROCESS

Why is Yucca Mountain the only site that DOE is studying?

Congress made the decision to focus on the Yucca Mountain site as a potential geologic repository when it amended the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 (the EIS refers to the amended Act as the NWPA). The Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 provided for a process for selecting